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Response

Claims 1, 4-6, and 13-17 will be pending following entry of the preceding amendments. The Examiner has allowed claims 1 and 4-6. He, has, however, finally rejected claim 5, contending its subject matter is anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,276,712 to Welch, et al.

Respecting claim 5, Applicants previously noted that the *first* portion of the inflatable cushion of Applicants' invention comprises *both*

- at least one inflatable node adapted, when inflated, to be positioned at approximately head level of the occupant; and
- uninflated material adjacent the at least one inflatable node.

According to the Examiner, the device of the Welch patent includes an inflatable node in main portion 3 as well as uninflated material in the form of shield 13. See Office Action at p. 2. Applicants previously argued that shield 13 is not part of the same cushion portion as main portion 3, but rather is a distinct object spaced from main portion 3 and separately connected to the roof rail of the vehicle. The Examiner disagreed, contending that shield 13 is "adjacent" main portion 3 and that both are part of the same "first portion" of an inflatable cushion. See id. at p. 3.

Applicants continue to believe the Examiner's contention is erroneous. However, because shield 13 of the Welch patent surrounds only tube 9 (and, arguably, collar 121 in the version of Fig. 2)--but *not* main portion 3, Applicants propose to revise claim 5 slightly to recite that the uninflated material "abut" the at least one inflatable node. Based on their previously-submitted arguments and the Examiner's

responses, Applicants believe no new search is needed to evaluate this proposed revision.

Further, because *shield 13 of the Welch patent is neither attached to nor formed with main portion 3*, Applicants propose adding dependent claim 13 exploiting this distinction between their invention and the Welch patent. Similarly, because only one main portion 3 is depicted as part of air bag 2 of the Welch patent, Applicants propose adding dependent claim 14 indicating that the first portion of the cushion include uninflated material *positioned between two inflatable nodes*. Applicants request that the Examiner enter and allow these claims (and additional dependent claims 15-17) as well.

Conclusion

Applicants request that the Examiner enter the preceding amendments and allow claims 5 and 13-17 and that a patent containing these claims and allowed claims 1 and 4-6 issue in due course.

Respectfully submitted,



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CERTIFICATE OF FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that the foregoing Amendment and Response is being transmitted by facsimile, to telephone number 571-273-8300, this 24th day of July, 2007.



Dean W. Russell

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